

Eliminating the Wet-Dog Smell

Sometimes towel-drying won't completely get rid of moisture in your dog's coat.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. I have three Pembroke Welsh Corgis who love to play in water. I dry them off after each play time but have noticed that after a while the ridges on their backs have a very bad odor. I bathe them once a month but the smell comes back in 1½ weeks. We have not tried to blow-dry them, as they don't care for that kind of noise. Do you know what could be causing that odor, or how I can eliminate it?

A. Watching those little rascals play under a hose must be hysterically funny! Unfortunately, their odor problem probably stems from the fact that you are not blow-drying them after their water play. You won't get rid of that musty smell unless you also get rid of the moisture, drying their coats all the way from the skin out. That nasty "wet-dog" smell is caused by a buildup of bacteria, and towel-drying just won't cut it. I would invest in a "quiet dryer," a table-top model that is much less noisy than the floor-standing dryers found in grooming salons. They're great for shy dogs or those who get aggravated by all that noise.

A bad smell can stem from a variety of causes. Some dogs, especially the hound breeds, exude more coat oil than others, causing doggy odor. Retrievers love to roll in any awful-smelling organic material they come across in their daily romps. Bad odors may also have a medical cause such as mange, ear infections, or periodontal disease. Anal glands that need to be emptied also smell pretty funky.

Try experimenting with different blow-dryers to see if there is one your dogs can tolerate. Also, grooming sprays will freshen them up between baths so you won't need a clothespin on your nose when your furry friends need nuzzling.

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